

*United States
Department of Agriculture*

*Strategic Plan
1995-2000*



*Office of the Secretary
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INTRODUCTION

Purpose

Executive Order 12898 (February 11, 1994) requires each Federal agency to develop an agency-wide strategy for addressing environmental injustices. The goal of the USDA Environmental Justice Initiative is to make a positive difference in the lives of people. To this end, USDA is committed to integrating the best education, research and technical practices across USDA agencies into programs that meet the needs of its customers in minority and low-income communities. USDA is committed to continuing to work cooperatively with Federal, State and local Government and with the private sector to improve the underlying conditions which put people at risk assisting children, youth and families across the nation in striving for a better life.

Background

The U.S. Department of Agriculture was established by Congress in 1862 "to acquire and diffuse among the people of the United States useful information on subjects connected with agriculture... and to procure, propagate, and distribute among the people new and valuable seeds and plants." USDA touches the lives of 260 million Americans each day as well as billions of people around the world. Some USDA daily activities include:

- (1) Helping American farmers and ranchers,
- (2) Improving the quality of life in rural America, including access to water, electricity and telephone service,
- (3) Managing national forests,
- (4) Protecting soil and water,
- (5) Preventing spread or introduction of foreign plant and animal diseases,
- (6) Increasing agricultural exports,
- (7) Facilitating the marketing of American agricultural products,
- (8) Feeding hungry people, and ensuring that nutritious meals are provided for 25 million school children each day,
- (9) Conducting research and education to improve agricultural practices and nutrition and health of consumers, and
- (10) Improving food safety.

USDA programs and activities are administered in seven key areas:

- ♦ Natural Resources and Environment,
- ♦ Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services,
- ♦ Rural Economic and Community Development,
- ♦ Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services,
- ♦ Food Safety,
- ♦ Research, Education and Economics, and

♦ Marketing and Regulatory Programs

What Environmental Justice Means to USDA

U.S. agriculture is the most productive in the world. U.S. consumers have access to a great variety of safe, nutritious food at affordable prices. The production of food and fiber affects the natural environment through practices such as cultivation of soil, the application of water for irrigation, the use of fertilizer and pesticides, and the rearing of livestock.

USDA has contributed greatly to the success of American agriculture. While continuing to build upon their successes, USDA must also ensure that its programs do not cause disproportionate negative direct and indirect impacts on the lives of low-income and minority people. At USDA, environmental justice has a variety of potential implications for the way it conducts its business, including:

- ♦ The education of producers about the use of pesticides and fertilizer in crop production and their potential effect on human health and the environment.
- ♦ The location and management of federal research facilities, grain storage sites, inventory lands, hazardous waste sites, and underground storage tanks.
- ♦ The administration of technical assistance and loan and grant programs to socially disadvantaged customers.
- ♦ The provision of food programs and nutrition education for pregnant women, children, and families in low-income communities.
- ♦ The carrying out of nutrition research on the needs and food intake of diverse ethnic populations.
- ♦ The delivery of extension education programs in Spanish and other languages, and
- ♦ The collection of statistics and demographics of minority farmers and minority-owned farming operations, including American Indian farmers and ranchers.

USDA's Implementation Strategy

USDA's implementation strategy reflects the work of a task force composed of representatives of USDA agencies, including the Office of Civil Rights Enforcement (OCRE). It also reflects USDA's strong commitment to identify and address disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority and low-income populations, as required by President

Clinton's Executive Order 12898. This strategy is a dynamic process which will evolve as USDA identifies programs within USDA's mission areas that have environmental justice implications and as it solicits further input from the public and its constituencies.

The Under and Assistant Secretaries of each mission area are implementing the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994. As a result, reorganization of the Department of Agriculture and development of an environmental justice strategy converged. This provided opportunities for designing complementary planning, budgeting, and administrative systems that are consistent with and supportive of overall government reinvention and reform initiatives.

The USDA strategy is designed so that environmental justice principles and initiatives are incorporated into Departmental programs, policies, planning, public participation processes, enforcement, and rulemaking. USDA will pursue these principles as they relate to health, research, training, data collection, analysis, interagency coordination, the development of model projects, and in broader public participation through public comment, planning, outreach, communication, partnerships, sharing of information, education, and training.

Taking maximum advantage of these opportunities, USDA's proposed strategy recognizes the diversity of Departmental programs, constituents, and stakeholders at all organizational levels. The strategy is designed to be effective, cost-efficient, and flexible. It will evolve also in coordination with the new USDA organizational structure.

Secretary of Agriculture

Date:

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE STRATEGY

USDA's Environmental Justice Strategy is focussed on incorporating environmental justice objectives and principles into existing programs, policies, and systems. This approach will ensure that these principles and objectives will be a part of the day-to-day activities of USDA operations. By integrating environmental justice into Departmental programs rather than creating new and costly programs and systems, USDA will effectively and efficiently meet the principles and objectives of environmental justice.

The following are the specific steps that USDA will take to implement its Environmental Justice Strategy. USDA anticipates that this strategy will evolve and include additional steps as it is implemented.

1. **Issue a Departmental Regulation Establishing USDA's Environmental Justice Strategy.**

A Departmental Regulation will be issued by the Secretary which state the importance of environmental justice and explain USDA's objectives and principles in implementing its strategy. The regulation will direct Departmental agencies and offices to incorporate the Department's strategy into existing programs, policies and systems. Some of the actions that USDA's agencies and offices will be required to consider are expanded upon Step 2 of USDA's Environmental Justice Strategy.

2. **Incorporate Environmental Justice Principles and Objectives Into All Relevant USDA Programs, Policies and Systems.**

The USDA operates a wide variety of programs related to environmental justice, as the examples in Appendix A illustrate. Under the Department's Environmental Justice Strategy, the principles and objectives of environmental justice, as contained in Executive Order 12898, will be incorporated into these and other relevant programs, policies and systems. In addition to the steps described below and the programs discussed in Appendix A, the Department anticipates that, as the strategy is implemented, other Departmental activities will be identified that should also incorporate the environmental justice principles and objectives.

To accomplish this step in the Department's strategy, the following actions will be taken where appropriate and necessary:

- A) Identify Departmental programs, policies, and systems that should incorporate environmental justice principles and objectives;
- B) Revise applicable Departmental and agency regulations to incorporate environmental justice principles and objectives;
- C) Revise applicable Departmental and agency program management to incorporate environmental justice principles and objectives;
- D) Assign official responsibilities and accountability for achieving environmental justice goals by revising, where necessary: (1) delegations of authorities, (2) organizational charts, mission statements, and formal functional statements and (3) official position descriptions and performance standards, for affected employees and agencies; and
- E) Identify resources necessary to develop and implement the strategy in Departmental programs, policies, and systems.

3. **Ensure Effective Implementation of USDA's Environmental Justice Strategy.**

To ensure the effective incorporation of environmental justice principles and objectives into Departmental programs, policies, and systems, the following actions will be taken where appropriate and necessary:

- A) Develop an inventory or database consisting of community, professional, and technical resources to assist agencies in developing effective environmental justice activities, including establishing a bibliographic index at the National Agricultural Library;
- B) Identify interagency responsibilities for areas with environmental justice implications and work cooperatively within the Department as well as with other Federal department's and agencies, and state, tribal, and local units of government.
- C) Seek assistance, services and products from 1890 Land-Grant colleges and universities as well as other educational institutions to support USDA environmental justice activities;
- D) Develop formal management methodologies and establish performance measures consistent with the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) for environmental justice activities; and
- E) Incorporate environmental justice principles and objectives into

periodic reviews, assessments and evaluations of program activities.

APPENDIX A

PROGRAM INITIATIVES WITHIN USDA RELATED TO ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

The following are examples of current USDA programs, policies, planning, public participation, enforcement, and rulemaking activities related to environment and justice within USDA, according to the four categories as identified in Executive Order 12898.

1. Promote enforcement of all health and environmental statutes in areas with minority populations and low-income populations.

USDA complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to ensure that all programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance from USDA do not directly, or through contractual or other arrangements, use criteria, methods, or practices that discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national origin. In addition, USDA regulations prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, disabilities, age or national origin in programs and activities which USDA agencies make benefits available directly to the public. The Department conducts the following activities:

National program reviews to identify and eliminate discrimination in program delivery.

- ♦ Data collection on program participation rates of socially disadvantaged producers.
- ♦ Assessments of changes to food assistance programs to determine if barriers prevent diverse groups from participation.
- ♦ Agreements entered into by USDA agencies include standard clauses designed to prevent discrimination.
- ♦ Facility pollution prevention plans first evaluate collection, maintenance, and analysis of information of the race, national origin, income level, and other information for areas surrounding Federal facilities where the facilities are expected to have a substantial environmental, human health, or economic effects on surrounding populations.
- ♦ Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) ensures consideration and analysis of the effects of natural resource decisions on the human environment. USDA policy and procedures for NEPA compliance require that effects on population sectors be considered.
- ♦ Members of peer panels convened for reviewing and ranking competitive research grant proposals are selected based upon their training and experience in relevant scientific fields and the need to maintain a balanced membership (e.g., assure that the views of minorities and women are represented).

USDA's enforcement of human health and environmental laws include memoranda of understanding and intergovernmental agreements with Indian tribes, educational institutions, State agencies, and Federal agencies such as Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Department of Labor (DOL), Department of Defense (DOD), Department of Energy (DOE), Health and Human Services (HHS), and Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Examples include:

- ◆ Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Tennessee Valley Authority to establish a source of technical assistance for environmental cleanup on property held in USDA inventory.
- ◆ Interagency agreement with the Bureau of the Census to conduct a nationally representative survey of the U.S. population as a supplement to the Current Population Survey. The survey will measure, for all income groups, the extent of hunger and food insecurity in the United States. USDA will use the information to improve the design of nutrition assistance programs for low-income Americans.
- ◆ Cooperative agreement with the University of New Mexico to conduct a "Limited Resource Farmer and National Resource Inventory Special Study". Data will be used to more accurately define "limited resource farmer" and to investigate reasons for their lack of participation in USDA programs.
- ◆ Interagency agreement with HHS to create a rural health information clearing house, designed to collect and disseminate information on rural health issues, research findings related to rural health, and innovative approaches to the delivery of rural health care services, financing, and the health status of rural Americans and American Indians.
- ◆ Cooperative agreement with an 1890 institution to evaluate the effectiveness of intervention methods to improve the quality and well-being of the rural elderly in the South.
- ◆ Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with DOE to study options for the environmental cleanup and rehabilitation of former commodity (grain) storage sites, which became Contaminated through repeated applications of pesticides and other chemical treatments.
- ◆ Cooperative agreements with state agencies -- including health departments -- to participate in pest eradication efforts, which involve evaluation and communication of health risks due to pesticide application.
- ◆ Cooperative agreements with individual U.S. tribal organizations, tribal enterprises, and the established inter-tribal organizations to conduct export promotion activities for tribal agricultural products, which include range fed beef, buffalo meat, and seafood products from the reservations.
- ◆ MOU with six American Indian tribes for work on Indian lands and cooperative agreements with 26 towns and cities for providing technical assistance on animal damage control.
- ◆ Providing funds to the National Coalition to Restore Urban Waterways to train members of the Minority Environmental Association in six cities.
- ◆ Supporting a project with the Minority Environmental Association in Cleveland to test water quality in minority and poor communities.

- ◆ Provide support to a minority and rural housing area in North Carolina for installation of a clean water supply.

2. Ensure greater public participation

USDA has a long tradition of conducting effective outreach and education efforts focusing on minority populations at national, regional, state and local levels, including cooperative efforts with:

- 1890 Colleges, Land Grant Universities, and other historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs),
- the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities,
- Intertribal National University and other Tribal Nations,
- support for Employee Resource Groups (African American, Hispanic, Asian Pacific), and
- constituent groups and USDA county and advisory committees.

USDA uses a variety of processes and mechanisms to receive public input:

- ◆ Conservation Review Groups (including USDA, other government, and stakeholder representatives) at the local, county, state, and national levels review conservation policies.
- ◆ Public comments are solicited through the rulemaking process in national hearings, and suggestions are considered in the design and implementation of new or revised program and rulemaking activities.
- ◆ As required by the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, USDA collects information from the public, producers, and other program participants through customer service surveys and interviews. This information is used to measure customer satisfaction with USDA programs and implementation and to revise or re-engineer existing policies, rules, regulations, procedures, and business processes on an as needed basis.
- ◆ USDA agencies have specific programs and procedures in place to comply with the requirements under National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for public participation in agency decisionmaking. The NEPA process alerts the public of the likely environmental (including health and safety) effects of proposed agency programs before they are approved and implemented. The NEPA environmental impact statements and environmental assessments are made available to the public in a variety of ways -- local newspaper announcement, published in foreign languages, and Telecommunication Device for the Deaf (TDD).
- ◆ USDA has a tradition of direct, frequent communication in forums and with established, formal committees of stakeholders.
- ◆ Development of ecosystem management policies affecting national forests involves grassroots participation by communities and industries. Because ecosystems cross boundaries, USDA's Forest Service cooperates with other landowners on a voluntary basis and is working with rural communities to develop local natural resource-based economies that support sustainable ecosystems.

- ◆ Advisory boards provide input into USDA's research planning and program development, including issues related to environmental justice. In FY 1994, USDA had sixty-eight federal advisory committees. Thirty-eight committees are required by statute and twenty-one are authorized by statute. A wide variety of stakeholders participate in advisory committees providing an ongoing source of public input on USDA programs.
- ◆ The Cooperative State Research, Extension, and Education Service (CSREES) receives public input through program committees at the state and local levels and from other agencies at the state and national level.
- ◆ USDA's integrated pest management (IPM) strategies provide for state and local involvement in priority setting for research, education, and regulatory controls.

USDA also places heavy emphasis on outreach activities to help ensure public participation in planning and rulemaking processes as well as program delivery:

- ◆ The Women Infant Children (WIC) Program provides services to over 100,000 American Indian women, infants and preschool children through States and thirty-three American Indian Tribal Organizations which provide WIC services within their tribal areas. In April 1992, approximately 60 percent of all American Indian infants in the U.S. participated in the WIC Program.
- ◆ USDA participates in government-wide programs to increase the participation of small and disadvantaged businesses (including minority and women-owned firms) in contracting and procurement programs.
- ◆ USDA uses PASS (Procurement Automated Source System), a computerized directory of over 196,000 small businesses, and other sources to identify potential minority and women-owned firms for participation in USDA loan programs.
- ◆ USDA administers an Outreach and Assistance Program for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers by establishing goals for program participation rates on a State-by-State and county-by-county basis.
- ◆ USDA's Agricultural Conservation Program provides for cost sharing (up to 50 percent of the average cost of performing practices) for low-income farmers and ranchers who want to improve their conservation practices.
- ◆ Local program officials meet regularly with public and private officials on issues such as community development, housing, and farm activities in rural areas and how to target USDA programs to targeted populations.
- ◆ Through the Extension Service:
 - Indian Reservation Agents programs are located at 28 tribal reservations, which work with youth and adults in home economics, human nutrition, resource development, and agriculture.
 - The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program delivers information through educational programs for low-income citizens to improve their diet and nutrition.
 - The 1890 Land Grant Institutions, the Hispanic American Colleges and Universities, and many others in the Land Grant System have programs that target small and low-income farm producers to provide them with the expertise to become sustainable enterprises.

- Worker protection programs in Spanish and other languages have been developed to train migrant and resident farm workers.
- Special efforts have been made to reach non-English speaking minorities through publications and multi-media programs in several languages in the areas in which they are needed.
- ◆ USDA technology transfer programs give special emphasis to disadvantaged groups. Approximately 55 percent of USDA patent licenses and 53 percent of currently active Cooperative Research and Development Agreements are with small, minority-owned, female-owned, or rural area businesses.
- ◆ The 1890 Capacity Building Grants Program strengthens the 1890 Land Grant institutions in agricultural research and related activities. USDA is initiating a parallel program to strengthen universities that traditionally support Hispanic communities and plans to launch a third parallel program to support Tribal colleges.
- ◆ USDA established a National Center for Diversity located at Kentucky State University, which provides training and education that will enhance diversity and pluralism within the Cooperative Extension System. The Center maintains a resource database, conducts surveys and provides training and consulting to the Extension Service stakeholders throughout the country.
- ◆ USDA operates consolidated county suboffices at the Tribal headquarters in each county having a reservation within its borders.
- ◆ USDA responds to research needs of industrial and field workers, such as byssinosis avoidance through cotton dust control, grain dust reduction, and safe pesticide application technology.
- ◆ USDA conducts research to describe the degradation of pesticides and other chemicals, thereby contributing to safe handling procedures. Since many farm workers who handle pesticides are minorities, well-designed safe handling procedures better ensure worker safety.
- ◆ USDA has established Centers of Excellence at 1890 Institutions to provide a USDA presence on campus and enhance the ability of the institution to deliver programs. A National Scholars Program provides scholarships and employment opportunities for college students at the 1890 Land Grant Institutions. The Summer Intern Program provides employment opportunities for high school juniors and seniors to increase minority participation in agriculture, forestry, home economics, and related fields.
- ◆ National Agricultural Statistics Service, in collaboration with USDA Forest Service, has also provided funding for an annual "Dream Warrior" Math and Science Camp sponsored by the Indian Resource Development Program to teach American Indian high school students the importance of math and science in many different careers, including those dealing with agriculture.

Detailed examples include:

USDA sponsored four regional hunger forums during 1994 where program participants, farmers, state case workers and advocates described the benefits and frustrations of the

Food Stamp Program and other programs. USDA held a series of national minority round tables to examine nutrition issues affecting minority populations and to discuss the implementation of Women Infant Children.

Consistent with the National Environmental Policy Act, USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) considers the affected public in its Mediterranean fruit fly (Medfly) Cooperative Eradication Program. The program has included the use of chemical controls in suburban, urban, or rural areas. APHIS establishes telephone hotlines, staffed with English and non-English speaking personnel (depending upon the demographics) to handle inquiries about the program. Residents and businesses are notified of control activities through a multi-lingual communications effort including door-to-door contact, local newspapers, and radio announcements. Fields are also posted to notify farm workers. Chemically sensitive individuals are given special consideration. Some States maintain registries of chemically sensitive individuals, and through these registries, APHIS can provide notice to registrants who could be affected by its activities.

Three USDA agencies -- the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, Forest Service, and Natural Resources Conservation Service are working together in the Urban Resources Partnership. These agencies are collaborating with other federal agencies and state and local governments, and public and private organizations to provide grants and technical assistance to minority and low-income urban communities. The program's goal is to accomplish urban ecosystem conservation through locally driven initiatives with grass roots support. To date, \$6 million has been allocated to 8 cities to assist urban residents.

The 1995 Urban Earth Day will be co-sponsored by Natural Resources Conservation Services and the Minority Environmental Association. Urban Earth Day is the first Earth Day festival organized to highlight and education about the environmental issues affecting people of color and the poor.

3. Improve research and data collection relating to the health of and environment of minority populations and low-income populations

A large proportion of USDA resources are devoted to research on production agriculture, economics, and nutrition. USDA has accomplished significant research related to environmental justice, as the following examples illustrate. USDA research underway or partially completed includes:

- ♦ Natural Resources Conservation Services has a cooperative agreement with Tuskegee University to conduct a study and provide guidelines and recommendations for implementation of the environmental justice policy.
- ♦ A study of minority and women producers in Southern states (to be completed in FY 1995) that will review -- (1) their participation rates in Agency programs; (2)

- their average base acreage and yields; and (3) their rates of election to the County Committees. The results will be compared to the rates for other producers to determine any disparities and to target potential corrective actions.
- ◆ Various studies on telecommunications and its impact on rural America.
 - ◆ A scientific evaluation of Women Infant Children nutrition risk criteria by the National Academy of Sciences, Institute of Medicine, Food and Nutrition Board. The final report is due in September 1995.
 - ◆ USDA initiatives under the President's Plan for the Pacific Northwest include studies on the effects of the plan on population sectors that include minorities, low-income, and American Indians. Those studies include: the East-Side Study, Pac-Fish, Columbia River Basin Assessment.
 - ◆ The Economic Research Service (ERS) programs include data collection and analysis on chemical use in agriculture and safety measures farm operators should provide workers who are engaged in chemical application activities.
 - ◆ USDA's ERS studies the differences in exposure to chemical toxins between metro and nonmetro areas, and the link of toxins to employment opportunities in metro versus nonmetro areas.
 - ◆ Scientific research is being conducted on body growth and nutrition of white, Hispanic and African American babies. Agricultural Research Service has pioneered in the research area of body fat distribution among various ethnic populations. Information on the nutrient/gene relationships in diverse populations will enable USDA to better form nutrient recommendations for individuals and groups.
 - ◆ Agricultural Research Services in partnership with five research universities in Mississippi, Louisiana, and Arkansas began the Lower Mississippi Delta Nutrition Intervention Research Initiative to apply state-of-the-art nutrition research tools to solve nutrition problems within the Delta and to contribute to the future health and well-being of the citizens of the region.
 - ◆ USDA county offices maintain a confidential automated file containing information on the race, sex, and ethnicity of participation rates for Title VI compliance purposes and for other reporting requirements, including the biennial report to Congress required by Section 2501 of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 USC 2279).
 - ◆ Property Environmental Tracking System (PETS) is a database system used to track the agencies' properties where hazardous waste investigation have been conducted or underground storage tanks have been found. Other information includes the disposition of the property.
 - ◆ USDA Rural Utilities Service (RUS) collects racial/ethnic data on its recipients annually. The data show the racial make-up of the borrowers' service area by providing information on both the "served" and "unserved" residences. Information is used to identify compliance review sites.
 - ◆ The USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) and the USDA Agriculture Marketing Service develops and maintains an agricultural chemical use database used in the Pesticides Data Program. The database provides statistically reliable state-level information on pesticides and fertilizers used on most food crops and

field crops in the major producing states. This information is shared and available to the public.

- ♦ Economic Research Service has many data sets on the environment; pesticide use in agriculture; land, water, and conservation; rural population and demography; and rural economics as well as the modeling and geographic information system tools needed to use these data sets to address environmental issues in agriculture and rural America.
- ♦ CSREES in partnership with Florida A & M University is completing a database of minority and women scientists to facilitate cultural diversity of scientific activities, such as peer review panels, program review teams and advisory committees.
- ♦ School Nutrition Dietary Assessment Study, 1993
- ♦ Evaluation of the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations, Final Report, 1990
- ♦ National WIC Evaluation, 1986
- ♦ Food Stamp Program Participant Characteristic Studies
- ♦ WIC Participant and Program Characteristics Studies: 1984, 1988, 1990, 1992
- ♦ Review of WIC Nutritional Risk Criteria, 1991
- ♦ Estimates of Persons Income Eligible for WIC in 1989: National and State Tables; County Tables
- ♦ Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and the Natural Resource Conservation Service, 1994
- ♦ Socially Disadvantaged Clientele of the Soil Conservation Service: A Market Research Report, 1994
- ♦ Identification of the Limited Resource Farmers Through the Utilization of the National Resource Inventory Data and Incentives for the Limited Resource Farmers to Adopt NRCS Programs, April 1994
- ♦ Rural Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development, QB93-38, 1993
- ♦ Rural Industrialization, QB94-30, 1994
- ♦ Rural Youth Employment, RICPS 30, 1993
- ♦ Health Care in Rural America, QB94-08, 1994
- ♦ Native American Health Care, QB93-40, 1993
- ♦ Rural America's Elderly, QB93-36, 1993
- ♦ Hazardous and Toxic Waste Management, QB93-59, 1993
- ♦ Information Access in Rural America, QB94-39, 1994
- ♦ Native American Natural Resource Management, QB-39, 1993
- ♦ Population Migration in Rural America, QB93-35, 1993
- ♦ Poverty in Rural America, QB94-01
- ♦ Retirement Communities, RICPS 23, 1993
- ♦ Alternatives to Waste Disposal, RICPS 14, 1992
- ♦ Crime in Rural America, QB94-09, 1994
- ♦ Rural Education QB92-15, 1992

4. Identify differential patterns of consumption of natural resources among minority populations and low-income populations.

- ♦ CSRES collects, maintains and analyzes information on the consumption pattern

of populations who principally rely on fish and wildlife for subsistence. This information is communicated to the public regarding health risks of consumption patterns, e.g., University of Alaska educational programs for native Alaskans. The State Cooperative Extension Service publishes guidelines reflecting the latest scientific information available concerning methods of evaluating human risks, if any, associated with the consumption of pollutant-bearing fish or wildlife. Fact sheets and bulletins are disseminated through the Extension service delivery system to appropriate target populations.

- ♦ USDA's NASS and the Intertribal Agricultural Council established a formal agreement and funding to conduct a pilot agricultural statistics survey in the summer of 1994 for all tribes and reservations in the State of Montana. The major data needs are number, size, and type of farm; crop area estimates; cattle, sheep, and horse inventories. In summary, this study identifies management solutions to the deficiencies in the agricultural statistics profile of American Indian Substantial new management, attention, action, and resource allocation to improve the agricultural statistics profile for American Indian farms and ranches has begun,
- ♦ USDA is committed to establish and promote environmental justice goals relevant to minority and low-income populations affected by all agency programs. County committee approvals of individual applications for program participation have the most potential for disproportionate adverse effects on minority and low-income populations. Over 40,000 of these decisions are made on an annual basis by the more than 2,800 consolidated Farm Services Agency county offices and committees. USDA recently established procedures to assure minority representation on the county committee in any county in which the percentage of minority producers is five percent or more. In such counties (or communities), when a representative of a minority group has not been officially appointed to the committee, the committee is required to appoint a "minority advisor" to represent the views of the minority population in the county or community.
- ♦ A USDA Forest Service National Resource Book on American Indian and Alaska Native relations working draft, which will be released in April, 1995, will provide guidance for the Agency in working with American Indian Tribes regarding their special governmental status, culture, treaty or other statutory interests and rights and is expected to expand development of cooperative relationships so that Tribes have an opportunity to be included in the USDA Forest Service cooperative and resource forestry programs.
- ♦ USDA's Limited Resource Farmers' Initiative encourages socially disadvantaged individuals to enter and continue farming. In 1994, approximately \$3 million was allocated to the 1890 institutions to provide training to small farmers to do a better job of management and to understand what USDA services are available and how to take advantage of these services.
- ♦ USDA is conducting small farmer town hall meetings to address marketing,

customer service, risk management strategies, and technical and financial assistance.

- ◆ USDA is currently working to establish an Incubator Farm Initiative which would allow for the training of young aspiring farmers and would review policy documents for the purpose of identifying language that present barriers to program participation by small farmers.